

**Africaterphis, a new genus for the African species of *Terphis*;
and a redescription of the Brazilian genus *Terphis* Erichson
(Diptera: Acroceridae)**

by

Evert I. Schlinger

(Department of Entomology, University of California, Riverside)

SYNOPSIS

A new genus, *Africaterphis*, is described for two African species, *acroceroides* Sabrosky (type species) and *gertschi* Schlinger, previously placed in *Terphis* Erichson. *Terphis* is redescribed on new material of its type and now sole included species, *nodosa* Erichson, from Brazil.

The new genus and species, *Terphis nodosa* Er., was described by Erichson (1840) from Brazil. One hundred and ten years later, Sabrosky (1950) described the second species, *T. acroceroides* Sabr., of this rare and odd little philopotine acrocerid genus from the Belgian Congo. Following Sabrosky in placing an African species in a monotypic Brazilian genus, Schlinger (1960a) described the third species, *T. gertschi*, from the Cape Province of South Africa. However, Schlinger (1960a:496) had some doubts about placing either of the African species with *Terphis* from Brazil, and besides giving a set of differentiating characters for the two species groups, said . . . "If and when more specimens and/or more species can be studied, perhaps further differences will be found that may warrant the erection of a separate genus or subgenus for the South African species . . ." The receipt of a nice series of *Terphis acroceroides* from Southern Rhodesia, together with a male specimen of *T. nodosa* Erichson from Brazil and three male and female specimens from Brazil and Honduras of a new genus and species closely related to *Terphis* from Brazil has enabled the author to further evaluate these "*Terphis* species" and establish that the African "*Terphis*" belong in a distinct genus.

This is the fourteenth in a series of articles dealing with reviews, revisions or new taxa of acrocerid flies which have been prepared as a prerequisite to a monograph of the family Acroceridae. Most of these earlier articles were cited in Schlinger (1960b), while others published since are: 1961a, 1961b, 1962 and 1965.

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HISTORY OF *TERPHIS*, SENSU LATO

- 1840: *Terphis* was described by Erichson with *T. nodosa* Er. from Brazil as the only included species.
- 1914: *Terphis* was discussed by Wandolleck in his seldom-examined monograph of the Acroceridae. No descriptions were given, but the species discussed included *T.*

nodosa Er. and *T. nasuta*. The latter name is here considered a *nomen nudem* since no description was given and the only figure (Pl. 1, fig. 20) was a poor lateral view of the head, one which would fit any presently included species. Also another name, *T. aspera*, although not used in this 1914 paper, is here considered a *nomen nudem* as no description or figure is available (see discussion in text under *Africaterphis gertschi*). Wandolleck did, however, give good figures of the wing and male genitalia of *T. nodosa* Er., which possibly were drawn from the type specimen.

1950: Sabrosky described the second known species, *acroceroides*, from the Belgian Congo and partially described the genus as based on both African and Brazilian species without actually seeing a specimen of *T. nodosa*. But (footnote on pg. 52 of this paper) he later saw a specimen of *T. nodosa* and indicated that the placement of the African species in *Terphis* was probably correct.

1960a: The genus *Terphis*, sensu lato, was briefly diagnosed by Schlinger and *T. gertschi* was described as new from the Cape Province. The two African species were compared with the Brazilian species, and doubts on the proper generic assignment of the African species were given.

The genus *Terphis* can be separated from *Africaterphis* by the following key:

Antennal tubercle covered with dense, short hair; eyes covered with sparse, extremely short hairs; frons small, but projecting; mouthparts small, but rostrum with long apical setae and prementum, visible; ocellar tubercle flat behind; prothoracic lobes joined; postscutellum well-swollen; spiracles present in tergites I-VI, but apparently functional only in I-III; sternites II-IV fused with tergites ***Terphis* Erichson**

Antennal tubercle shiny, bare; eyes bare; frons inconspicuous, not projecting; mouthparts with only blunt, asetate rostrum visible; distinct pit present behind ocellar tubercle; prothoracic lobes close together, but unjoined; postscutellum swollen; spiracles present in tergites II-IV, but apparently functional only in II-IV; sternites separated from tergites ***Africaterphis*, new genus**

Terphis Erichson

Terphis Erichson, 1840, Entomographien 1:168; Sabrosky, 1950, Proc. Roy. Ent. Soc. Lond., 19(3-4):48 (Notes on *T. nodosa* only); Schlinger, 1960a, Ann. Natal Mus., 14(3):496 (notes on *T. nodosa* only, not *Terphis* diagnosis).

Type species: Terphis nodosa Erichson (monotypic)

Redescription: Small flies (5-6 mm.) distinctly patterned with yellow, white and brown areas; head large, nearly spherical; eyes holoptic above and below antennae; covered with sparse, extremely short hairs; antennae three-segmented, short, inserted on ventral forward margin of head; segment I mostly hidden under antennal tubercle, segment II short, but about twice as long as wide, covered with short pubescence; segment III swollen basally, extending into thin apical style about twice as long as base and with single apical seta; antennal tubercle small, protruding medially over base of antennae, entirely covered with dense short hairs; frons small, but projecting; postclypeus small, protruding only slightly below occipital margin; mouthparts small, indistinct, but visible structures include rostrum with long apical setae, and a shorter prementum; only lateral ocelli present on small,

flat, triangular, ocellar tubercle; occiput short, flat, rigid, above without medial depression, then strongly concave to cervical region; prothoracic lobes joined medially but for only short distance; mesonotum finely reticulated; postscutellum swollen, easily visible under scutellum; tergites of abdominal segments II-IV with obvious dorsolateral bumps; spiracles present in tergites I-VI, but apparently only functional on I-III; abdominal sternum somewhat concave medially; sternites II-IV fused completely with tergites; wing venation quite reduced with cell formation restricted to anterior margin of wing; even veins R_{4+5} and m_1 faint (Erichson, 1840, plate 1, fig. 10 is quite accurate).

Discussion: The only included species under this revised concept is *Terphis nodosa* Erichson from Brazil.

Specimen examined for above description: Brazil, 1 ♀, Nova Teutonia, 27°-11' Lat. and 52°-23' Long., 12.ix. 1938, Fritz Plaumann (USNM).

This species is apparently quite rare, as the only other specimens known to the writer are the holotype from "Brazil," and one male from Itaquaquecetuba, Sao Paulo, Brazil, reported by Sabrosky (1950).

Africaterphis Schlinger, new genus

Terphis species from Africa by various authors (not Erichson, 1840).

Type species: *Terphis acroceroides* Sabrosky (1950), by present designation.

Description: Small flies (3-6 mm.), black or brown with distinct yellow or light brown markings. *Head* small, higher than long; eyes holoptic above and below antennae, apilose; antennae three-segmented, short, inserted on ventral forward margin of head: segment I hardly discernable underneath antennal tubercle, segment II round, short, covered with short pubescence; segment III swollen basally, extending into thin apical style from once to twice as long as base, ending without or with one to four short setae; two distinct sensoria present on swollen base of segment III; antennal tubercle small, weakly or strongly protruding out and over base of antennal segment I, shiny and bare, or with few long setae present on lateral ventral margin; frons inconspicuous, not projecting; postclypeus small hardly projecting below occipital margin; mouth parts small, only a short blunt rostrum visible; ocellar tubercle flat or somewhat raised laterally, with or without median ocellus, but lateral ocellus visible; occiput rugose, broad and swollen above, with distinct median depression behind ocellar tubercle.

Thorax rugose with large irregular depressions most common on prothoracic lobes and on anterior part of mesonotum; prothoracic lobes come close together behind head, but do not join, a deep groove which separates them continues back onto mesonotum; postscutellum visible under scutellum, but not greatly swollen; squama large, higher than head height, joined to thorax along upper 2/3 of anterior margin; legs short, slender; three pulvilli present; wing long, thin, weakly veined except along anterior margin; vein R_{2+3} reaches margin well before apex, no longitudinal veins beyond R_{2+3} reach wing margin, even R_{4+5} and M_1 only distinct basally (venation as given in Schlinger, 1960a, fig. 24, for *Terphis gertschi* Sch.).

Abdomen short, inflated, dorsum smooth or incisures present between segments; sternum flat or slightly convex, sternites separated from tergites; spiracles present in tergites

II-VI, but apparently functional only in II-IV; genitalia small, mostly concealed under caudal tergites.

Distribution: The genus is now known only from Africa: Belgian Congo, Cape Province Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa.

The two included species in *Africaterphis* can be separated as follows:

Mesonotum black with some indication or distinct yellow vittae starting behind prothoracic lobes and running to scutellum **acroceroides** (Sabrosky)

Mesonotum black with brown spot behind prothoracic lobe **gertschi** (Schlinger)

***Africaterphis acroceroides* (Sabrosky), new comb.**

Terphis acroceroides Sabrosky, 1950:50; fig. 1; Schlinger, 1960a:497.

This brightly coloured yellow and black species was originally described from two males from the Belgian Congo. Schlinger (1960a) discussed the first females of the species and recorded them from Portuguese East Africa.

Recently I examined 11 males from Southern Rhodesia as follows: 6 ♂♂, E. Vumba, 6.5.1965 (D. Cookson), taken swarming above a banana plant; 5 ♂♂, Bomponi, Vumba, 16.5.1965 (D. M. Cookson); 2 specimens of which were also collected above a banana plant, 2 other specimens were taken over a guava bush, and one specimen was labelled at 2,500 ft. elevation.

***Africaterphis gertschi* (Schlinger), new comb**

Terphis gertschi Schlinger, 1960a:497, figs. 24, 25.

This species was described from two males from Ceres, Cape Province, South Africa. A poorly preserved male specimen has been examined recently which is presumed to be this species. It had the following labels: (1) "British Caffraria, Castilucan, 1862"; (2) "*Terphis aspera* Wdick*" and "MSS of Benno Wandolleck, in Berlin, 1899." This specimen was loaned to me from the Hope Museum, Oxford, England.

The name "*Terphis aspera*," as given on the above label, is here considered a *nomen nudum*, inasmuch as the large revision of this family published by Wandolleck in 1914 did not contain this species name, any actual description of the genus or any species of *Terphis*.

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